



ADRC Highlights

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Asian Disaster Reduction Center Biweekly News

May 16, 2002

➤ **5th ISDR Inter-Agency Task Force Meeting**

The 5th ISDR Inter-Agency Task Force Meeting was held in Geneva on 25-26 April. ISDR Inter-Agency Task Force is chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and is composed of 10 representatives of agencies and organizations of the UN system; 8 representatives from regional entities; 5 representatives of civil society and non-governmental organizations.



ADRC was newly designated as Task Force member under category regional entities. The main functions of the Inter-Agency Task Force are following:

- to serve as the main forum within the United Nations system for devising strategies and policies for the reduction of natural hazards
- to identify gaps in disaster reduction policies and programmes and recommend remedial action
- to provide policy guidance to the ISDR secretariat
- to convene ad hoc meetings of experts on issues related to disaster reduction.

WHO, UN-HABITAT, Ibero-American Association of Civil Defense and Civil Protection, Global Fire Monitoring Center (Freiburg, Germany) were the other newly designated members.

In the meeting, reports from the 4 task force working groups (WG1: Climate and Disasters, WG2: Early Warning, WG3: Risk Vulnerability and Impact Assessment, WG4: Wildland Fires) were presented. In addition, the progress report on "Global review of disaster reduction initiatives" supported by the Japanese Government and ADRC were made. Discussions on the input of disaster reduction in the context of the preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development were held, and emphasis was made on the importance of the "Yokohama+10" (the IDNDR Yokohama Conference was held in 1994 and 2004 is the +10 year) review process.

ADRC expressed its willingness to promote ISDR activities in Asia, especially in helping the ISDR secretariat to identify national ISDR platforms/committees of ADRC member countries, promoting the [Unique Disaster Identifier \(GLIDE\) concept](#) to be shared among disaster reduction stakeholders worldwide, and to provide the multi-language glossary on disaster reduction. The details of ISDR activities in UN can be found at website <http://www.unisdr.org/>

➤ **Opening memorial symposium by DRI**

[As was mentioned in the previous edition](#), the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution (DRI) was opened on April 27, 2002 in Kobe. An opening memorial symposium discussing the theme "Preparing for Future Disasters - the Expected Role of DRI", was held

prior to the opening of the center.

Keynote Speeches:

- "The Activities of the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution" by Mr. Yoshiaki KAWATA, Executive Director of DRI, Director and Professor of the Research Center for Disaster Reduction Systems, Disaster Prevention Research Institute, Kyoto University
- "Disaster Measures in California" by Mr. Kenneth TOPPING, Visiting Researcher, Kyoto University

Panel Discussion - "The Expected Role of DRI"

Coordinator: Mr. Yoshiaki KAWATA

Panelists:

- Prof. Yoshiteru MUROSAKI (Research Center for Urban Safety and Security, Kobe University)
- Mr. Junji MIZUKAMI (Director, Disaster Reconstruction Bureau, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan)
- Mr. Yoshihiro TANABE (Director-General, Disaster Prevention Bureau, Shizuoka Prefecture)
- Ms. Chiaki WATANABE (Researcher, Akita Prefectural University)
- Mr. Kenneth TOPPING

Yoshiaki Kawata introduced the activities of the DRI in his speech, mentioning a disaster management course for local management officials, a consulting service for local disaster planning formulation and JICA seminars.

Kenneth Topping then gave an introduction to the disaster policy of California State, which puts emphasis on disaster reduction following an earthquake rather than trying to predict earthquakes. Furthermore, he presented a case study of managing a Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and illustrated the need to set a SEMS in place at all hierarchical levels (state, county and city), and the importance of conducting effective disaster management.

Panelists spoke of specific disaster cases and raised the point that damage was actually increased because the results of technological breakthroughs could not adequately be disseminated to the public. It was concluded that the important things in disaster reduction are the partnership between public administrations and communities, dissemination of information to the public and development of disaster reduction at the local level regarding the anticipation of disasters, and accordingly increasing the awareness of local governments.

➤ **Recent Natural Disasters in Asia**

☐ [Storm caused serious damages in Bangladesh](#)

The triple-decked M.V. Salahuddin-2 has sunk in a storm in southern Bangladesh at around midnight on May 3, 2002. 369 people were killed and at least 100 people are missing. A lot of damages by the storm have been reported since the end of April.

(5/11 Reuters News etc.)

☐ [Kyrgyzstan suffered damage from landslides](#)

Landslides sparked by heavy rains destroyed hundreds of homes in Kyrgyzstan, causing a lot of damages in May 2, 2002.

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[3rd Floor, IHD Bld. 1-5-1, WAKIHAMAKAIGAN-DORI, CHUO-KU, KOBE](#)
651-0073, JAPAN E-mail: editor@adrc.or.jp Phone: +81-78-230-0346